

# ***"Nashville Speaks!"***

**The Nashville Tourism & Business Communities Speak  
with One Voice About the State of the Tourism  
Industry and Provides Input for Its Future Direction**

**Prepared by:  
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## ***Methodology...***

- ❑ **7 Focus Groups representing leaders and practitioners in all industry sectors:**
  - ✓ **Group 1: Hotels with more than 300 rooms**
  - ✓ **Group 2: Hotels with fewer than 300 rooms**
  - ✓ **Group 3: Staff of the Nashville CVB**
  - ✓ **Group 4: Attractions**
  - ✓ **Group 5: Convention services, venues, transportation**
  - ✓ **Group 6: Restaurants, clubs**
  - ✓ **Group 7: Industry-at-Large**

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## ***Purpose***

- ❑ **Assess strengths and weaknesses of City's tourism product**
- ❑ **Identify opportunities for future development**
- ❑ **Establish priorities**
- ❑ **Seek consensus**
- ❑ **Speak with one voice in a report back to the Mayor and City's leadership**

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## ***Key findings...***

- **Develop Downtown as Nashville's major demand-generator; there is not necessarily a need to "import" a major theme park development, e.g., Disney  
(# 1 @ 32 Votes)**
  - **There is alarm about a deteriorating Downtown and the loss of attractions that Nashville has experienced in recent years.**

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## ***Key findings...***

- ❑ **Develop Downtown as Nashville's major demand-generator; there is not necessarily a need to "import" a major theme park development, e.g., Disney (# 1 @ 32 Votes)**
  - ❑ **There is alarm about a deteriorating Downtown and the loss of attractions that Nashville has experienced in recent years.**
- ❑ **A development master plan must be implemented without delay. (#2 @ 30 Votes)**
  - ❑ **Expediency (in addressing the issues) is now a necessity.**
  - ❑ **Leadership and action in addressing these concerns must preferably be driven by Municipal government**

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## ***Key findings...***

- ❑ **A new Convention Center is needed for Nashville to maintain its position as a viable meetings and convention marketplace. (#3 @ 27 Votes)**

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## ***Key findings...***

- ❑ **A new Convention Center is needed for Nashville to maintain its position as a viable meetings and convention marketplace. (#3 @ 27 Votes)**
- ❑ **Governance of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau must be investigated in order to make the organization truly representative of its membership and the industry, and insure that it delivers optimally against its mandate of marketing Nashville tourism. (#4 @ 11 Votes)**

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## ***1. Create a 365 demand-generator attraction...***

In the Industry-at-Large session, there was consensus that the demand-generator could and should be Downtown Nashville itself with improvements made to both the infrastructure and the experience offerings that leverage the Music City USA brand:

- ☐ Development and use of the river for recreation and entertainment purposes
- ☐ More music, live entertainment and mainstream retail, eating establishments
- ☐ Perhaps special tax incentives for building renovation)
- ☐ More residential dwellings and more accessible, affordable parking



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## ***1. Create a 365 demand-generator attraction...***

### ***Attractions need protecting!***

- ❑ **There is a need to preserve, protect, promote and support the attractions that currently exist in Nashville.**
- ❑ **Further closings or attrition of the attractions base was deemed to be unacceptable given the City's already limited attractions menu.**

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## ***1. Create a 365 demand-generator attraction...***

**By making downtown more viable and attractive as a destination, it would encourage additional attraction development to compliment downtown and the Music City USA brand:**

- ☐ **Indoor/Outdoor water park**
- ☐ **Branson-type theatres**
- ☐ **Downtown baseball park**
- ☐ **State Fair (similar to Kentucky Exposition)**
- ☐ **Theme the Convention Center**
- ☐ **Music venues/concerts**
- ☐ **Unique attractions, e.g., "The Navy Ship"**

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## ***2. Develop a Master Plan...***

**The call was made for a Downtown Master Development Plan that would integrate:**

- ☐ **Intra-city transportation (including light rail)**
- ☐ **Attractions**
- ☐ **Convention Center**
- ☐ **New Convention Center hotel**
- ☐ **Music Row**
- ☐ **An intensive effort to clean up and enhance the Downtown area**
- ☐ **An improved River-Walk area**

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## ***2. Develop a Master Plan...***

- ❑ **The development of the Plan calls for for inclusion of those entities with a stake in Nashville's success, specifically, municipal government, Chamber of Commerce, Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Downtown Partnership, State and community sectors including business, music and sports.**
- ❑ **The development cycle must be placed on a "fast-track" basis. The traditional 3-5 year planning cycle is considered too drawn-out given the urgent need to protect and grow Nashville's tourism industry.**

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## ***3. "Expand" the Convention Center...***

**There was general consensus that the existing Convention Center is too restrictive and limits the City's ability to capitalize on the movements in the meetings and convention industry.**

**The industry...**

- ☐ **Supports creating a 400,000 square feet to accommodate lost meetings and convention opportunities**
- ☐ **Believes it should be placed on the Riverfront and add retail or contiguous or attached to the Arena**
- ☐ **Believes it should be supported with a new convention hotel as part of the new development**

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## **4. CVB Governance...**

**The following observations were made about the CVB:**

- ☐ **Organization is valued and appreciated for the job it does in promoting the city**
- ☐ **Must do a better job of reporting to and communicating with those it represents**
- ☐ **The organization needs to be more responsive to the needs of the industry**
- ☐ **Various tourism industry constituents are not currently well represented**
- ☐ **Performance and results must be measured and the organization made more accountable to the industry**

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## **4. CVB Governance...**

### **Suggested reorganization of CVB governance:**

- ☐ **At a minimum, and irrespective of the CVB's ultimate reporting mechanism (to Chamber, Tourism Commission, or independent board), create an expanded Board of Directors with full industry representation (hotels, restaurants, sports, attractions, retail, charitable organizations, City government)**
- ☐ **Make it more accountable to the industry**
- ☐ **Make it a stronger and possibly a member-driven organization that does not create competition with the Chamber**
- ☐ **Continue to fund the organization with room tax revenue**
- ☐ **Find new ways to increase the budget**

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## ***Additional Recommendations...***

5. ***Fix Public Transportation & Parking particularly in the Downtown area.***
6. **More Collaboration among the entire tourism industry.**
7. **Comprehensive marketing and product development plan.**
8. **Make Music Row more of an attraction.**
9. **Maximize the potential of the Airport.**
10. **Music City USA should capitalize on the contemporary movement of Country Music.**



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## **In Summary:**

**The hospitality industry believes we should be concentrating on...**

- ❑ Making Downtown Nashville's "theme park" that delivers on the Music City USA brand franchise**
- ❑ Developing a master plan that coordinates and integrates Nashville's product development**
- ❑ Building of a new convention center & hotel**
- ❑ Altering the governance of the CVB to allow the industry to be more involved**